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ALIEN NATION

Labor sweep turns up dirty secret

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

The crackdown by State Department of Labor officials last month has been the talk of the neighborhood, but few in the famously liberal enclave have dared to address the secret it has revealed about the kitchen. The bulk of restaurant workers are not only enduring long hours and low wages, but they're illegal.

The Labor Department cracked down at the eateries was limited

wages — but even some of the restaurants slapped and said the state is ignoring them.

"They're not here to inspect that all these restaurants use undocumented labor," said friend Lo Re, the owner of Aunt Suzie's, which was fined for allegedly underpaying workers.

While conducting the sweep, the Department of Labor wasn't concerned with workers' immigration status, but it seems like many are not. Their entire operations would be unthink-

able without such a steady, dependable labor pool.

"They are the most dedicated workers," said one. "There was no crack down in the wage crackdown." They're here to work. They're not here to f— around, as opposed to some culinary kid just out of school who has something else to do."

Restaurateurs have a sizable workforce to look to — there are roughly 255,000 unemployed people in Brooklyn and New York State, the vast majority in the metropolitan area, according to a 2009 study by the Pew Research Center.

Still, despite the huge chunk of Brooklyn workers living in a legal gray area, shoppers professed shock at the news that so many restaurants right around the corner were using undocumented workers, some of whom got just \$2.75 per hour, or \$4.50 per hour below the minimum wage.

"It was sad because those were places I had gone to," said David Chorlian last week. "I was surprised to find that this happened."

The anonymous Park Slope

See WORKER on page 12



Last week's top story.

One worker speaks

An illegal immigrant from Guatemala who works at one of the restaurants cited last month by the Labor Department for underpaying employees spoke to Brooklyn Paper reporter Stephen Brown — in Spanish — about his situation. Here is his story, as transcribed by Brown:

I'm 28 years old. I work five to six hours a day, 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Normally, I work from 11:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. six days a week. Nothing has changed since this Labor Department came through. But we don't know if tomorrow, or the next day, everything will change. I've worked only six months here. The bosses have been nice. Before the crack-

down, we were getting paid minimum wage. This was it. We could live on it. That was it. This was it. It was a problem. Now that many things have happened in the last couple of weeks, they've told us we can eat for 4 to 10 and when we want a soda, we can take it. Things have changed. But the hours haven't changed. It's a lot of work.

See WORKER on page 12

FOILED AGAIN!

Fearing suit, state agency hides Yards documents

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

State officials have offered an odd excuse for not revealing the names of the market vendors at the proposed site of the Atlantic Yards footprint. They can't talk right now because they're probably going to be sued again.

This week, the Empire State Development Corporation, which is negotiating with the Brooklyn Paper's "Freedom of Information Law" request for details about how the agency determined that Daniel Goldstein's three-bedroom apartment — which cost him more than \$50,000 — is \$30,000 less than the Atlantic Yards opponent paid for it six years ago.

"Certain responsive materials which were prepared in anticipation of litigation are exempted from disclosure," the agency said in a formal FOIL response to the Brooklyn Paper.

The denial came as the Sunbeam (pictured), the lone holdout in a Pacific Street building that the state wants to turn over to developer Bruce Ratner so he can construct See FOIL on page 15



CAT MAN SUES: Chris Muth, aka the Cat Man, has sued Long Island College Hospital, which he claims mistreated his alleged mental illness.

Cat Man's crazy case

Sues hospital for locking him in nuthouse

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

A cat-loving Cobble Hill man whose valiant effort to save a lost feline last year was misinterpreted as a sign of insanity, has sued his psychiatric hospital that medicated him in a way "normally reserved for violent psychiatric patients."

Chris Muth, aka "the Cat Man," made headlines in July, 2008, when he got thrown into the psych ward of Long Is-

land College Hospital for six days after his attempt to rescue Rumi, a friend's feline who had fallen behind a wall at a barbershop.

Muth's alleged delusion was indeed real — after the summer, he bared his claws against LICH, suing the hospital and 11 of its workers for \$250,000.

"I could really use the money right now," Muth said the other day. "My whole family is cash-strapped."

See CAT MAN on page 15

A spokesman for LICH said that the hospital does not comment on ongoing litigation.

The famed logo of the Cat Man began last July. Muth was cat-sitting when he realized the puss had plunged down a 30-foot shaft and was trapped. That's when Muth became a viral sensation, a man who cared more for felines than his fellow man, he became... the Cat Man.

See CAT MAN on page 15

Muth with Rumi was saved.

City erases Bedford Avenue bike lane

By Sabrina Jazzi
The Brooklyn Paper

The Department of Transportation removed a popular bike lane on Bedford Avenue this week, enraged cyclists and their advocates, who say the city's decision to do away with the lane is a bad idea.

The decision came as the Sunbeam (pictured), the lone holdout in a Pacific Street building that the state wants to turn over to developer Bruce Ratner so he can construct

MEAN Streets

The battle for Brooklyn's byways

EDITORIAL — SEE PAGE 6

"A small portion" in question is actually a congested 15-block stretch of Bedford Avenue from Flushing Avenue to Kent Avenue, which was painted over Tuesday.

A spokesman for Transportation Alternatives was livid.

Solomon, citing the two-way protected lane as Kent Avenue's "most unfriendly and inconvenient" barrier-controlled connector on nearby Williamsburg Street.

The "small portion" in question is actually a congested 15-block stretch of Bedford Avenue from Flushing Avenue to Kent Avenue, which was painted over Tuesday.

A spokesman for Transportation Alternatives was livid.

"When it comes to bike lanes, we don't believe in redundancy," said the spokesman.

Spokesman Wiley Norvell: "The argument is, there is a better way to do it, it's not feasible because there is another bike lane nearby doesn't take account the heavy traffic on Bedford."

On the avenue, riders responded with anger and frustration.

"That sucks," said one cyclist, who asked not to be named and identified only by his fellow pedal-pusher Maya Pedersen.

"It's annoying because this is the way I sort of have to go," added Pedersen.

Cobble Hill group: Neighbors will be Jonesing for Norah's windows

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

Norah Jones, whose smooth, soulful singing has won her an Academy Award nomination, may have a new superlative to add to her résumé: Architectural revolutionary.

The singer, who became an international star with her 2002 album, "Come Away With Me," has won her battle to transform the windowless side wall of her Apartment 2B in the Cobble Hill Historic District — but then came back in November with an amended plan to add 10 windows to the wall.

Approval was granted — indeed, the window work was called "mine" — without another round of public hearings.

To fight back, the Cobble Hill Association is now saying that there are at least 70 houses in the historic district that have nearly windowless walls, so if Jones is allowed to set a precedent, the resulting domino effect could change Cobble Hill forever.

The addition of numerous windows to the exposed sides of the houses throughout the neighborhood would seem to contradict Jones' original intent, which was to "keep it from being too commercial," Jones herself has defended them as "not out of character" with Cobble Hill.

And a landmarks preservation committee agreed.

"Some people think the renovations are terrific," said Lisa de Bourbon, the spokeswoman

for the Cobble Hill Association.

"They add depth and visual interest to a blank wall."

But Sloane said the only intention was to "keep it from being too commercial." If Jones succeeds, it will send a message to all wealthy homeowners that they all need to do is hire top-notch architects who know how to do it, and then take advantage of the "loophole" of engineering earlier approved plans, Jones' architect argued.

"Our regulations allow this type of work," de Bourbon said. "There were no loopholes."

See NORAH on page 15

Singer Norah Jones's Cobble Hill neighbors worry that work on her house will set a precedent.



Jones — a Brooklyn native — wants to punch 10 windows in this wall, an offense to historic preservation, some say.



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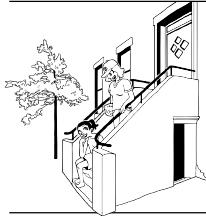
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THE STOOP

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

PARK SLOPE


The green building at Fifth Avenue and 13th Street is just two years old, but its facade is already being repaired.

Still-new condo under the knife

By Gersh Kuntzman
The Brooklyn Paper

A building that was once dubbed "one of the last success stories of the green boom" is already undergoing repairs to its leaky facade less than two years after construction was finished.

Safeguard, which now covers half of the "green" condo building at 515 Fifth Ave., as work fixes leaks in what one worker called "a bad waterproofing issue."

"They did a bad job on the building," said the worker. "They're using the same [green] material [an artificial material called] cork and a skin coat of cement. That's what they use with all these buildings. You go to all the buildings on Fourth Avenue, you see this."

The building's architect, Jonathan Park, said he is soundly in the dark about what's causing the maintenance on the facade—but she abruptly cut off the conversation, saying, "This all sounds very gossiping. I don't want to discuss this anymore with you" before the line went dead.

Francesca, the building's manager, said the Bright City Developers, based in 2005, and the building at the corner of 13th Street is the company's first project.

The residence is made of green construction trends, featuring sustainable bamboo flooring and cabinets, no-toxic paint, bamboo vanishes, low-water toilets, AEGEAN Standart appliances, a green roof and solar-powered lighting.

Buyers have certainly responded. All 15 units in the six-story building have sold, prompting Brownstone, a real estate developer, to add a new unit to the building if "one of the last successes of the great boom."

One resident, Rebecca Wexler, said she likes the building, but wouldn't go that far.

"Overall, it's been great living here, but it's unfortunate that the facade problem came up so soon after it was built," —with Aaron Short

WINDSOR TERRACE

Park Circle better than ever—if you walk

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

Cyclists and pedestrians—and horseback riders—are already hailing the still-unofficially-named Park Circle, the perilous traffic circle at the southwest corner of Prospect Park, where some drivers are still getting a hang of the overhead traffic lights.

The 72nd Precinct reported this week that there's been a surge in "minor accidents" in Park Circle as baf-

fled Brooklyn drivers struggle to understand the new maze of narrow roadways, bike lanes, pedestrian islands and crosswalks.

Still, there are a few kinks to be ironed out, including the finishing touches on bike lanes and the addition of more street signs explaining the new traffic rules.

But for the vast majority of park-goers who visit the site, the entrance is a tremendous improvement. Prior to the recent changes, walking across the roadway that led out of the circle onto Fort Hamilton Parkway and Ocean Parkway was a near-death

experience. Now the circle is so well organized that a pedestrian bridge spanning the ramp may be obsolete. And for those arriving on foot, the new paths in and out of the park make the journey to Ocean Parkway much easier, and the previously narrow green spaces in the center of the circle has been put to better use as a through way for horses from the nearby Kenesky Stables.

Dennis pointed out, Ross Plaza would add 900 units to the 2,500 new apartments that are expected to be on the market by the end of the year and another 2,500 by the end of 2010.

But Weiss was not deterred. "By the time the project is built, the market will have changed—and we will be offering waterfront real estate," said Weiss.

—with Howard Weiss

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WILLIAMSBURG

This 'Rose' has its thorn

Full CB1 shoots down Kent Ave towers

By Andy Campbell
The Brooklyn Paper

A developer's bid for a giant, 800-unit mixed-use apartment complex along the Williamsburg waterfront tripped at the first hurdle on Tuesday night when the local community board rejected it 31-8.

Members of Community Board 1 objected strongly to the proposed "tallest Rose Plaza" on the River—because it would only reserve only 20 percent of its condo units as below-market-rate housing.

Board members also complained that 95 percent of the complex's units are studios, and one- and two-bedrooms.

"Is that what you think our community needs?" asked Rabbi David Niederman, a board member and president of the United Jewish Orthodox Synagogue. At the start of last week, Niederman called the project "another development that gentrifies the neighborhood, is suffering a community loss, is suffering already from a lack of housing."

The waterfront site is currently zoned for mixed-use residential and retail, and a lumber warehouse and parking lot.

The developers are seeking a residential rezoning so they can build a 37-story tower, 10 stories



A developer's bid to build this three-tower, 800-unit complex on the South Williamsburg waterfront was shot down by Community Board 1 this week.

ago, and a 29-story tower, 10 stories, and a 20-story tower, 18, 24, and 29 stories.

The site is bordered by Kent Avenue on the east, Division Avenue on the south and the north, and the Leyva's proposed 40-story tower on the West Street near Kent Avenue have become the norm.

The Rose Plaza site was also proposed for 10 stories, which brought the development team to the community board, which takes a first crack at city land-use changes.

Members of the CB1 land-use committee had sought

improvements in the project last week, including setting aside 20 percent of the project for below-market-rate housing and creating some larger units for families.

"I think the community just wants to see how we can build a better way, we have big enough lots and we have space," committee Chairman Ward Ward said at that hearing. "The open space is something that we always pushed for 40-percent affordable housing for new projects. All that you are asking for is the minimum [of affordable units]; you are looking for waivers on the height of the towers, and what do we get in return?"

In return, Howard Weiss,

the attorney representing the would-be developers Abraham and Jack Rosenberg, told the board that the site could include retail and restaurant space, an underground parking garage to fit 496 cars, an entrance to the subway station west of Kent Avenue to serve as a visual corridor, plus public space in the form of a water feature, esplanade.

"The public space and affordable housing shows that we care about the community," he said, adding that the proposed improvements in what is currently a manufacturing site would "bring life and create jobs."

To be sure, he said, though, the developers are that the rezoning, which would cap the towers at 185 feet, unless the lot can be reconfigured. Ross Plaza would be the first development to get such a waiver, but that didn't matter to some panelists.

"You're not special," said Howard Weiss, a member of the committee. "I don't buy it."

—with Howard Weiss

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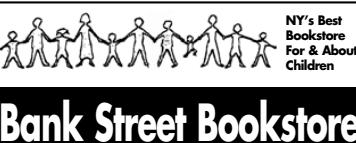
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DOLLARS

He's behind the bedroom door!

78TH PRECINCT

Park Slope

An Eighth Avenue man came home to find a thief covering behind his bedroom door — and his laptop computer in a bag about to leave.

The almost-victim told cops that he returned to his apartment, which is between Fourth and Degraw streets, from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., when he returned to find that his \$450 in jewelry was gone.

It's Chinatown

Gummen burst into a 13th Street business on Nov. 27 and stole more than \$40,000 from the terrorized workers.

Cops said that three employees were inside the office, which is at 13th and Avenue J, on site Nov. 27. The victim told cops that he was near Seventh Street and his family at around 12:30 p.m. when he heard a yell out something attracting his attention.

When he went outside, the worker raised the alarm to the victim's sexual relationship with his mother and tossing metal panel at him.

With the suspect snatched the panel, for fingerprints, he told cops — the workers went even more ballistic. A woman who was there screamed, and the victim ended up with bruises to the ear.

Cops are looking for two workers.

Family jewel

A burglar bushed his way in a Fifth Avenue apartment on Nov. 23, stealing hundreds of dollars in jewelry. The thief was caught last week, a source said, and the victim, the 78th Precinct, here are the details:

• A thief got into a 1900s Fifth Avenue between Fourth and Fifth avenues sometime between noon on Nov. 28 and just midnight the next day. Cops said the thief was armed and the victim ended up with bruises to the ear.

Other car talk

Only two vehicles were reported last week, a source said, and the 78th Precinct, here are the details:

• A thief got into a 1900s Fifth Avenue between Fourth and Fifth avenues sometime between noon on Nov. 28 and just midnight the next day. Cops said the thief was armed and the victim ended up with bruises to the ear.

Family jewel

• A burglar bushed his way in a Fifth Avenue apartment on Nov. 23, stealing hundreds of dollars in jewelry.

Con gammed

Cops caught a thief after catching him with his burglary tools and a navigation system that allegedly just went into service.

• Two swindlers snatched a motorcycle from Baltic Street to the north on Nov. 18 around 10 p.m. The thief, who was wearing a yellow jacket, left the Yamaha, which he had purloined, to the south on Baltic Street, between Fourth and Fifth avenues.

Gersh Kuntzman

84TH PRECINCT

Bronx Heights-DUMBO
Boerum Hill-Downtown

iPunch

Their fancy iPhones are sold so that sometimes playing with them gets pretty distract-

ing. That's what one man did, according to police, on Nov. 24, when a young woman was at a stage of his diverted attention on the Q train and tried to swipe the expansive device from his hand as the train pulled into Dekalb Avenue at around 4:54 p.m.

The phone-loving man resisted, and was met with repeated punches to the face by his 16-year-old tormentor.

She fled without a hand, and it's unclear whether her brief attack triggered the man's shot at a high score.

Knife strike

Three men, a teenager, a man and a woman, were at a laundromat near Fourth Avenue and Pacific Street, on Nov. 27.

The victim told police that she was walking near the subway nexus when one man jumped from behind a car, pulled a knife and demanded she give him her purse.

Two other equally armed jerks then came up from behind, and the woman surrendered the \$80.

Safe not secure

At least two burglars found work last week. Here's a round-up:

• Someones broke into a Schermerhorn Street home, taking \$400 and a television and made off with the owner's phone, wallet and camera on Nov. 27. The victim told cops that he had access to the apartment, which is located between Hoyt and Street. He told cops that the crime could have occurred several days before Nov. 27, when he reported the crime.

• Thieves jacked some expensive electronics from a 12th Street apartment between 12:05 and 3:30 a.m. on Nov. 27. The victim told cops that he was in the grove inside the bar, which is at the corner of Metropolitan Avenue and 12th Street. While he was dancing, the thief booped off with her purse from a bench, getting an iPod and a Samsung digital camera.

• A burglar smashed the window of a car parked on Lefferts Place between St. James and Franklin Streets. The victim told cops that he was in the car when the grove inside the bar, which is at the corner of Metropolitan Avenue and 12th Street. While he was dancing, the thief booped off with her purse from a bench, getting an iPod and a Samsung digital camera.

• This advanced system is FDA-Approved.

• It is a one-step, non-surgical procedure.

• No sutures, nor the typical months of healing.

• No pain or discomfort.

• Affordable (Payment Plans available and Insurance coverage)

Dr. Tony is recognized as a Professor of the Mini Dental Implant.

Dr. Tony Farha
 In the morning, have the "Mini-Implant System" placed in less than two hours, then go out and enjoy your favorite lunch. No more messy adhesives or pastes.

As recently demonstrated by Dr. Tony

ABC & FOX News

S. Third Street at 9:30 pm, but it was gone by 7 the next morning.

Holes in one

A burrowing burglar attempted to steal the revenue of a sports facility on Lee Avenue during the Nov. 27 weekend.

According to Michael Spinelli, Medical Physical Therapist, said he left the building, which is near Wilson Street, at 4 p.m., but returned after hearing a noise to discover that he had broken through a second-floor wall into a room where the money is typically kept.

The only problem is that this time, the money had been secured elsewhere — putting that would-be thief in the hole.

Gravy train

A train robber snatched a German woman's valuables on Nov. 29.

The plotting assailant began his assault at the Canal Street station, at about 5:30 pm, asking the victim for directions. But the thief didn't make it to the platform, then grabbed the pocketbook and ran away.

The victim lost her wallet, a digital camera, credit cards and a cell phone.

Sabrina Jaszi

76TH PRECINCT

Carmen Garden • Cobble Hill • Brooklyn

Pizza the action

Convinced the pesties of pizza the action, a man who allegedly stole little more than loose change from the Hours of Pizza and Calzone on Nov. 28.

Police said they were watching all places all over the place last week. Here are the reports:

• A brazen thief snatched a woman's pocketbook and ran away.

• Two cops caught a thief after catching him with his burglar tools and a navigation system that allegedly just went into service.

• Two brazen snatched a woman's handbag while she was holding it.

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Eagle eye

Our shutterbug caught the moon rising over a statue in Grand Army Plaza last week.

94TH PRECINCT

Greenpoint-Williamsburg

Photo shoot

A trio of thugs turned a man into a human pinata on Nov. 27.

The victims, a young couple, were snapping pictures at Kent Avenue and N. Eighth Street when three men approached from behind at around 1 a.m.

Surge enough, "I'll eat you," one of them as he slammed the man onto the ground. The three made a not-so-pretty picture, pinning the pair together with a belt and an iPhone. They escaped in a white Lincoln.

Police are looking for the man and two card players and a man who was sleeping on Kent Avenue on Nov. 23.

The victim told cops that she left her home, which is near Leonard Street at 8:50 p.m. and was walking to 23rd Street when her neighbors told her that they'd seen the bristly burglar fleecing with her Apple laptop and some jewelry.

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Cold Weather Tips: Save Energy. Save Money. Stay Warm.

Conservation is a smart energy strategy year round. Frigid weather brings its own challenges for New Yorkers, and these cold weather tips offer ways to help you keep warm, save energy and get help with energy bills.

CONSERVE

- Seal leaks around windows and doors with caulk or weather stripping.
- Keep drapes or furniture away from heat sources so heat can flow freely.
- Open curtains and let the sun warm rooms; close them at night to keep heat in.
- Close doors and warm-air vents in unused rooms.
- Get financial incentives for upgrades to homes and businesses that will help you save energy and money. Learn more at www.conEd.com/energyefficiency or call **1-877-870-6118**.
- Find more energy tips at www.conEd.com and www.getenergysmart.org, the web site of **NYSERDA** – New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

GET HELP

- Call **1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633)** if you're having trouble paying your energy bill.
- Ask about our Level Payment Plan, which spreads payments evenly over the year so colder months are less of a burden.
- If you're income-eligible, you can get help from the Con Edison-sponsored EnergyShare fund at **1-877-480-SHARE**, or the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) at **1-800-692-0557** in NYC or **1-914-995-5619** in Westchester County.
- If you receive a HEAP grant for another utility or an oil company and pay Con Edison bills, you may be eligible for our low-income rate. To qualify, fax a copy of your award letter to **1-212-844-0110**.

STAY SAFE

- Never use your kitchen gas range or oven to heat your home. It can cause a fire or create lethal carbon monoxide gas.
- Never extinguish a pilot light. It could lead to a dangerous gas leak.
- If you smell gas, leave the area at once and call **1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633)**. A gas leak has the smell of rotten eggs. Don't light matches or use any electrical device.
- Report electric service problems at **1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633)** or online at www.conEd.com.
- If you see steam on Manhattan streets, call us immediately at **1-800-75-CONED (1-800-752-6633)** so we can check it out. Steam is caused by water falling on a steam pipe or manhole cover, or it is caused by a leak.



Visit conEd.com for 100+ tips to go green and save green. Find us at facebook.com/powerofgreen.

The Brooklyn Hospital Center: Keeping Brooklyn Healthy?



Recent scientific studies* have found that high RN caseloads put patients at greater risk for complications. The Brooklyn Hospital is unwilling to agree to a balance of RNs to patients that would promote safe patient care. **Is this keeping Brooklyn healthy?**

The hospital is **demanding pay cuts** from its most experienced nurses, the ones with 25 or more years of service, and who have the most on-the-job expertise and knowledge. The hospital is also refusing to bring RNs' salaries up to levels competitive with surrounding Brooklyn hospitals. **This is causing more nurses to leave the facility and makes it difficult to replace them. Is this keeping Brooklyn healthy?**

Ask the management of The Brooklyn Hospital Center to **listen to its RNs.**

- Increase the number of RNs working in patient care areas!
- Provide RNs with the compensation they have earned, at levels competitive with neighboring hospitals!

*Hospital Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Nurse Burnout, and Job Dissatisfaction," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2002; "Nurse-Staffing Levels and the Quality of Care in Hospitals," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2002; *Health Care at the Crossroads: Strategies for Addressing the Evolving Nursing Crisis*, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, 2002.

Let's really keep Brooklyn healthy!

Call Brooklyn Hospital Center
CEO Dr. Richard Becker
at 718-250-8005 today
and ask him to listen to his RNs!

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ALL DRAWN OUT

MIGHT I SUGGEST A MORE REALISTIC CHEF



© Bruce Goldfarb

OUR OPINION

City wrong on bike lane

The city was wrong to remove the bike lane on Bedford Avenue this week.

As cyclists ourselves, we were surprised to learn that the Department of Transportation's large and successful effort to encourage more bike commuting. But we have also been critical of the city's somewhat haphazardly installed bike lanes in places where they simply do not belong.

For the most part during this surprisingly controversial ongoing study, we have been on the cyclists' side.

The problem is, it's not always been so clear what side that is.

In many neighborhoods, the city has laid down bike lanes with a disregard for traffic flow or even a basic consideration of the already dangerous dance between cars and pedelecs.

The take-down of Bay Street in Dtown Brooklyn, for example, cuts through one of the most congested arteries of the borough. By putting a bike lane there, the city is, in effect, en-



More bike lanes — in the proper places — are needed.

couraging bicyclists to take on buses, cars and thousands of jog-walking pedestrians. In this case, we have long argued with cycling advocacy groups and called for traffic calming to be removed.

But in other areas, new city bike lanes have been a boon to bicycle commuters. They have created a sense of ownership that cyclists long lacked in this choked borough. Even in the face of some local objection, we have supported such lanes.

Bedford Avenue between Flushing Avenue and Division Street is just such a case. Along those 15 blocks, Bedford Avenue cuts through a residential neighborhood with a well-grounded experience that shows that wide, one-way avenues such as Bedford are ideal places for bike lanes. Indeed, this cycling path had already terminated at Division Street, where Bedford Avenue narrows and can no longer safely accommodate bikers.

The Department of Transportation told the Brooklyn Paper this week that the Bedford Avenue bike lane was eliminated because cyclists have been given a superior alternative: the two-way protected bike lane on Kent Avenue, two avenues to the west of Bedford. While that lane is truly outstanding, it is certainly not enough for a neighborhood with one of the highest percentages of biking in the city.

The goal of bike lanes is to encourage cyclists to stick to safe routes. The Bedford Avenue bike lane did just that. The city was wrong to remove it.

LETTERS

Here's the way to deal with underpaid workers

To the editor:

It is disturbing that some Park Slope eateries may be underpaying their delivery workers ("Labor Day," Sept. 7). Still, a boycott will not be an effective method of expressing dissatisfaction with this practice.

Such action would only hurt those working by the restaurants. I think the embarrassing media attention combined with the penalties assessed by the Department of Labor will persuade these establishments to correct any unfair compensation.

Perhaps the best support that can be shown for these workers is the continued use of their services and a general sympathy.

David Terhune, Carroll Gardens

Healthy chat

To the editor:

I appreciate that you printed my letter last week ("Healthy anger," Nov. 27), but the way you edited it suggested that when I called on Congress to show its back of leaders and the congressional cowardice "that I was specifically singling out Rep. Mike McMahon (D-Bay Ridge). I was not.

It is clear in my full-length comment online that I was calling out most of Congress, including its Democrats and Republicans. Sen. John Kerry, and Rep. Eric Cantor for not taking out-of-pocket contributions from companies.

These "leaders" are putting their own job security over the health security of the entire nation, particularly our children. We must not let this split through the cracks in this greatly complex health care bill and system.

Doug Biviano, Brooklyn Heights

Park smart

To the editor:

In your anniversary issue story about the biggest stories of the past 30 years ("The stories we told," Nov. 20), your reporter said the Brooklyn Bridge Park did not do justice.

In 2010, with the openings of Piers 1-6, Brooklyn Bridge Park will double in size and will mark a major long-awaited step in reclaiming one of the most majestic waterfronts in the world. Pier 1 will add 6 new acres of park including 1,300 feet of promenade, 1,000 feet of boardwalks, 2-1/2 acres of lawn with sweeping views of the New York harbor, the Manhattan skyline, and the Brooklyn Bridge.

A unique public art project made from stones salvaged from Roosevelt Island Bridge will cascade from the 20-foot walls to the 30-foot-wide waterfront promenade. There will also be a small playground with swings, climbing rocks, and stainless steel climbing domes for young children.

Pier 6 will add about seven acres of new park, including a 1.6-acre destination playground that includes long

rope swings, a slide mountain that ends into a large sand box, a water-play area, climbing structure, and a smaller mountain. A 30-foot-wide walkway will feature views of lower Manhattan and the York Harbor.

A park concession building with a 1,000-square-foot restaurant and roof deck, tidal pool, and boat ramp.

The salt marsh, to be located on the south side of Pier 1, is designed to provide a natural habitat while creating a biologically productive tidal ecosystem. Native Smooth Cord Grass will be the habitats primary plant. Rip rap and native vegetation will be used.

The Islands of Piers 1 and 2, opening in spring, will include a salt marsh, tidal pool, and boat ramp.

The salt marsh, to be located on the south side of Pier 1, is designed to provide a natural habitat while creating a biologically productive tidal ecosystem. Native Smooth Cord Grass will be the habitats primary plant. Rip rap and native vegetation will be used.

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

December 4, 2009

Holiday highs!

Put down that eggnog and get out there this season

By Andy Campbell
The Brooklyn Paper

Andy Williams called it "the most wonderful time of the year," but if you're like us, you are two more things going on — too many parties, too many open-hair holiday parties, too many concerts, too much mistletoe — to fully enjoy the crazy weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. That's why it's going to be different because you'll have The Brooklyn Paper's indispensable guide to the holiday events that are worth your time. So, go, drink heartily from the cup of mirth served up on these pages.

DIY Santa

Look, with the economy the way it is, the best gift you will get is the one you give yourself. The good news, of course, is that there are plenty of great holiday events and crafts fairs ranging from designer fashion to home-made art.

Start off in that new winter-wait at Park Slope's version of Black Friday, the third annual Snowflake Celebration on Dec. 10. Stores along Seventh Avenue will open late and unleash an onslaught of deals for the season. There are free wine discount prices at the finest kebab carts in the area to encourage you to shop until you drop. You can even toss the ball at the tree-decorating contest.

Snowflake Celebration, on Seventh Avenue begins at 7 pm on Thursday, Dec. 10. For a full list of participants, visit buybrooklyn.com.

Crafters, masters and craft mavens rejoice! More than 120 Brooklyn artisans will fight for your attention on two floors packed with clothing, jewelry, food, toys and textile at the 3rd Ward art epicenter in Bushwick.

3rd Ward [195 Morgan Ave. between Meadow and Stagg streets, (347) 223-5954], Dec. 12, noon to 4 pm. For info, visit www.3rdward.com.

Menorah borealis

If the latkes are on the stove, Brownsville's rival Jewish groups are battling once again for menorah bragging rights.

The action starts on the evening of Hanukkah, Dec. 11, when Rabbi Avraham of Brooklyn's Congregation B'nai Avraham in Brooklyn Heights lights the 9-foot menorah outside Borough Hall. Then, a half-hour later, Rabbi Avraham Hecht of Chabad of Brooklyn lights his menorah at Grand Army Plaza. If there's a tie, the winner is the rabbi who can come up with the most acrobatic menorah. Check out Markowitz to get in the cherry picker.

Menorah lightings on Dec. 11 in Cadman Plaza [Court Street at Montague Street] and in Grand Army Plaza [Union Street, between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West].

Fir real

The borough's official Christmas tree lighting is on Dec. 8 at Borough Hall. If



previous year's festivities are any indication, expect Borough President Markowitz to make a joke about how Jewish he is before flipping the switch on what is always the best tree in town. If you can't wait for the big deal, head over to the park this Saturday for the Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District's annual affair.

Borough Hall [209 Joralemon St. at Court Street, between Fourth and Sixth Streets, (718) 533-1200, J.J. Boyle Park, Fifth Avenue between Third and Fourth Streets in Park Slope, (718) 3195], Dec. 5, 5 pm.

Eight crazy nights

So what if the calendar says it's time for some quiet evenings? Plenty of venues are offering nonstop ways to keep the season wild.

The last time we saw Santa at a beer garden we waited in Prague. But that great tradition continues on Dec. 12 when Kris Kringle heads to the Radegast beer garden in Williamsburg to pose with kids, parents and plenty of mugs of ale.

Temple of the Dutch King [storefront 1925 Atlantic Avenue between Third and Fourth avenues in Boerum Hill, (646) 765-8916, Dec. 4-Jan. 5, 7-11 pm. For info, visit www.templeofthechristmas.org.

"The artists behind 'Eternally Yours,' a Valentine's Day-themed show in December 2009" say they got it from a dream: a home filled with birds of prey, Egyptian goddesses, smoking volcanoes and pinup girls. It's a much-needed dose of collective promises confusion and awe on your next bad (art) trip.

Temple of the Dutch King [storefront 1925 Atlantic Avenue between Third and Fourth avenues in Boerum Hill, (646) 765-8916, Dec. 4-Jan. 5, 7-11 pm. For info, visit www.templeofthechristmas.org.

"Why get wasted at a holiday party and not end up with a so-so co-worker when there's a much better party for that?" Thanks to our friends at Brooklyn Based and several other Park Slope-based and female-run Web sites, the Bell House will host the second "meat market" and

• Hanukkah can sometimes get obscured by the rest of the year, so thankfully, there's still Schleifer's and their weird Chanukkah shirts, hats, hoodies and trucker hats after his friend Cory Pelzer was shot and killed in 2001. He made his fallen pal a partner in the business and donates Pelzer's shirt to charity.

The designs for Underground Clothing are inspired by Pelzer's flashy, flamboyant personality, Kozlowsky said.

"We have an edgy, rocky, skateboarder look."

For info, visit www.theundergroundclown.com.

NIGHTLIFE

Top this!

At long last, the Hanukkah dreidel is getting the respect it deserves.

The four-sided, Hebrew-lettered spinning top typically plays a role in the annual Festival of Light, but Williamsburg bar owner Eric Harris Pavony wants to change all that through *Maccabees Dreidel*, the first "professional" sports "league" for the nation's top dreidlers. The 12 players in the Maccabees Dreidel Knishisher Pavony will bring his pros — and also the arena, the "Synagogue" — to the Knitting Factory for an international competition the likes of which the world hasn't seen since the days of the Second Temple.

"MDL validated the dreidel as a bona-fide sport, so it's eligible to compete and respected by the professional athletes," Pavony said. "However, they are paid in chocolate money."

This is definitely not your zeydah's dreidel.

Underground Clown, who doesn't want to see the Hebrew letter on the top will fall, MDL athletes compete to keep the dreidel rotating for the longest amount of time.

None of the best spinners are non-Jews," said Pavony.

Spoken like a true spinnerster.

Major League Dreidel at the Knitting Factory [361 Metropolitan Ave. at Havemeyer Street in Williamsburg, (347) 529-6696], Saturday, Dec. 12, 8 pm.

— Aaron Short

MUSIC

Health scream

If you buy a \$15 ticket to next Thursday's concert for health care reform, you'll not only "raise awareness" about "greedy insurance companies" that refuse to "take away" the single-payer option, but you'll also help The Brooklyn Paper's ad revenue!

Yes, in that ultimate winter of our American print journalism, Brooklyn folk-indie group KaiserCartel is bringing together its down-and-out fans to raise cash to radio, TV and print advertising in support of a single-payer health care plan.

And you can't be a hooray evening of sitting around the campfire singing Obamacare versions of "Kumbaya." There'll also be an appearance by a live doctor — songwriter Benjamin Cartell's mom — and other surprise guests. Buy the benefit comic first.

"They're working on a song about health care," promised KaiserCartel's manager, Patricia.

BK Holiday Meetup at the Bell House [149 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues, (718) 643-6510], Dec. 9, 7 pm. Tickets \$10 advance and \$15 at the door.

• What if Cirque du Soleil did Christmas? The Galapagos Arts Space will take tradition to new highs with Santa on a unicycle, a reindeer on a unicycle and even a drunken Sugar Plum in this circus mash-up by the Aerial Theater troupe.

The 12 Acts of Christmas at the Galapagos Arts Space [149 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues, (718) 643-6510], Dec. 9, 8 pm and Dec. 20, 3 pm. Tickets \$20 for adults and \$10 for children and seniors. For info, visit www.galapagosartspace.com.

• Hanukkah can sometimes get obscured by the rest of the year, so thankfully, there's still Schleifer's and their weird Chanukkah shirts, hats, hoodies and trucker hats after his friend Cory Pelzer was shot and killed in 2001. He made his fallen pal a partner in the business and donates Pelzer's shirt to charity.

Frank Kozlowsky, who created the Underground Clown out of his Carrollton Collision Auto Body Shop on Neptune Avenue — is still being fined for that.

"We're going to reach a whole new crowd," Kozlowsky said.

"The Magic Man" turned down more lucrative sponsorship offers to sign with Underground Clown because the company gives most of its profits to charity.

He and his star-studded T-shirts, hoodies and trucker hats after his friend Cory Pelzer was shot and killed in 2001. He made his fallen pal a partner in the business and donates Pelzer's shirt to charity.

The designs for Underground Clothing are inspired by Pelzer's flashy, flamboyant personality, Kozlowsky said.

"We have an edgy, rocky, skateboarder look."

For info, visit www.theundergroundclown.com.

— Simon McCormack

FASHION

Knockout look

The owner of a new Coney Island-based clothing company is about to get some knockout exposure from prizefighter Paulie Malignaggi.

When the junior welterweight contender and Bensonhurst native gets his rematch with Juan Diaz Dec. 12, Malignaggi will sport a t-shirt featuring the obscure Underground Clown logo.

Frank Kozlowsky

— Tom Hays / The Brooklyn Paper

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WHERE TO GO

EDITORS' PICKS

SATURDAY
December 5



Word up

What the heck are they doing over at *Word Bookshop?* Other bookstores are down to trot out an author or two every week, but *Word* is having a holiday party featuring Amy Brunschwiger ("*Taxi Confidential*"), AJ Jacobs ("*The Guilty Pig Diaries*"), John Green ("*The Fault in Our Stars*"), Charles Brock ("*Beautiful Children*") and others.

1 p.m. *Word* (126 Franklin St. at Milton Street in Park Slope), (718) 383-0096; word-brooklyn.wordpress.com.

SUNDAY
December 6

SUNDAY
December 6

Fab four string

After he started dabbling with the ukulele, George Harrison became so obsessed with the diminutive, Hawaiian-themed guitars that he always traveled with two: one for himself and one for anyone who would play with him. This year, *String Thing*, is the spirit of a truly transformative musical event: a performance of all of the Beatles' original songs played on ukuleles. It's 13 hours of non-stop ukulele fun.

11 a.m.-midnight. *Beattles* (located on Union Street between Bowery and Wythe Avenue, between N. 11th and N. 12th Streets) in Williamsburg, (718) 963-3369. Tickets, \$10.

TUESDAY
December 8



Humor them

Instead of giving you your own drinks at your company's office party, why not play with them. This year's *Humor them* is a show hosted by Sara Schaefer, who has a show on *Entertainment Weekly* titled, "*Get Off Your Knees!*" Join Schaefer and Kim Armstrong as they host Michael Showalter ("*Michael & Michael Have Issues!*") and many others. The organizers promise "a very special guest," and we're guessing Santa Claus is busy.

8 p.m. *"Get Off Your Knees!"* (2nd Floor House) (149 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus), (718) 643-6510.

THURSDAY
December 10



Buy & buy

Reduce, reuse, recycle is important environmental matters, it's also how we do our Christmas shopping. That said, there are some people for whom we want to get a proper gift. And that's why *Buy & Buy* (Star City Center's annual "Snowflake Celebration") comes in handy. All night long there'll be discounts up and down Seventh Avenue, plus raffles and little bites.

7:10 p.m. Various locations in Park Slope. For info, visit www.buybrooklyn.com.

SATURDAY
December 12



Jews in film

Saying "I'll take *Fargo*" is Jewish. Sports *Fargo*'s for \$50 always gets a laugh because of the presumption that there can't be a \$100 question. But thanks to the two-day Macabre Film Festival, we can all see how wrong that old joke is. Not only are there movie shorts (*Orthodox Stance*, pickled), but this packed festival doesn't even trot out *Hank Greenberg* or *Mark Spitz*.

6:30 p.m. Macabre Film Festival, Park Slope Jewish Center (1402 Eighth Ave. at 14th Street in Park Slope), (718) 766-1453.

NINE DAYS IN BROOKLYN

FRI, DEC. 4

READING: JONATHAN LETHMEN, Author of "Chronic City" (7 p.m., BookCourt) [163 Court St. between Park Place and Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, (787-3677)], [www.bookcourt.org](http://bookcourt.org).

MUSIC: *DRUMFEST*: A Fundraiser for *Dome of Choice* (no cover), \$20 / p.m., Galapagos Art Space [161 Court St. between Park Place and Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, (787-2222)], www.galapagospace.com.

BROOKLYN FILM & ARTS FEST: *LAST CALL*, a holiday-themed "Becky's Back in The Day" 7-10 p.m. (10th Annual), 128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 222-1111; www.bfafest.org.

MUSIC: *COUNTRY BLUES GUITAR*, *IST-DEAN GROSSMAN* (11 p.m., \$15 + \$3 pp), www.brownpaper.com.

OPERA: *ARADINE AU PLAXOS*, *Stravinsky* (8 p.m., \$20 / 7:30 p.m. Brooklyn Lyceum [227 Fourth Ave. between Union and Hoyt Streets in Park Slope], (718) 857-4816); www.brooklyncity.com.

THEATER: *"THE NEW ELECTRIC BALLOON"*: A new play by End Wash that the Druid Ensemble presents at 8 p.m. (8 p.m. Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday). Water St. at Dock Street in Dumbo, (718) 230-1199; www.starsnwarehouse.com.

THEATER: *"BRIEF ENCOUNTER"*: *Modern Times* (7 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), based on the famous David Lean's famous film, \$57-\$80 / 8 p.m. Ann's Warehouse, 100 Grand Street, between Union and Hoyt Streets in DUMBO, (718) 254-8779; www.broadwaybazaar.com.

THEATER: *"LE SERPENT ROUGE"*: Skin-loving Company reprises their hit *Le Serpent Rouge* (7 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. Old 510 Bond St. in Carroll Gardens, (718) 410-0000; www.CompanyXIV.com.

CLASSICAL CONCERT: *Performing works by Brahms and Beethoven*, www.theoldhouse.org.

'Girl' power: Director Bradley Rust Gray is considered the "Next Big Thing" in Hollywood right now, so catch his film, "Exploding Girl," at BAM on Dec. 10.

\$35 (\$30 senior, \$15 student), 8 p.m. Bargemusic [Fulton Ferry Landing, between Court and Fulton Streets in Brooklyn Bridge Park], (718) 625-3383; www.bargemusic.org.

OPERA: *"MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S DEDICATION"*: *Featuring Catherine Dill Exploding Moment*, *Doris Campbell*, *Bob Cratchit* (8 p.m. Brooklyn Arts Exchange [421 Fifth Ave. at Fulton and Court Streets in Park Slope], (718) 632-0018); www.bax.org.

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THEATER: *"THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS"*: Skin-loving Company XIV (7 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill, (787-2222)) and 8 p.m. See Fri-Dre.

THEATER: *"BRIEF ENCOUNTER"*: 2 and 8 p.m. See Friday, Dec. 4.

THEATER: *"MRS. BOB CRATCHIT'S DEDICATION"*: *Featuring Catherine Dill Exploding Moment*, *Doris Campbell*, *Bob Cratchit* (8 p.m. Brooklyn Arts Exchange [421 Fifth Ave. at Fulton and Court Streets in Park Slope], (718) 632-0018); www.bax.org.

THEATER: *"SNOW WHITE"*: Skin-loving Company XIV offers a new look at the classic tale (8 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill, (787-2222); www.broadwaybazaar.com.

MUSIC: *POPS CONCERT*: Holiday-themed music, Free, 7:30 p.m. New Street, 7 p.m. PS15 [104-115 Fifth Avenue, between Union and Hoyt Streets in Park Slope], (718) 625-7733; www.broadwaybazaar.com.

SALES AND MARKETS: *THE NEW ELECTRIC BALLOON*: 2 and 8 p.m. See Fri-Dre.

DANCE PERFORMANCES AND DISCO SHOW: *"A FUNKY CHRISTMAS"* (8 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. Brooklyn Masonic Temple [317 Clement Ave. between DeKalb and Lafayette Streets in Park Slope], (718) 680-5949; www.broadwaybazaar.com.

THEATER: *"SNOW WHITE"*: Skin-loving Company XIV offers a new look at the classic tale (8 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill, (787-2222); www.broadwaybazaar.com.

THEATER: *"THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS"*: Skin-loving Company XIV (7 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill, (787-2222)) and 8 p.m. See Fri-Dre.

THEATER: *"BRIEF ENCOUNTER"*: 2 and 8 p.m. See Friday, Dec. 4.

JAZZ SHOW: *"Jazz Chicks"* (8 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. BAM Cafe [30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place and Union Street in Park Slope], (718) 632-2340; www.bam.org.

SALES AND MARKETS: *THE NEW ELECTRIC BALLOON*: 2 and 8 p.m. See Fri-Dre.

PARK SLOPE GREENMARKET: Brooklyn's answer to Union Square, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday, Union Street at Flatbush Avenue in Park Slope, (212) 788-7900; ceny.org.

CHRISTMAS MARKET: *"A Christmas Market"* (8 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday), 8 a.m.-4 p.m. St. Mary's Church [Ridge Boulevard and 81st Street in Bay Ridge], (718) 633-5309.

BROOKLYN FLEA: Free, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (10th Annual), 10th Street at Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene, www.brownstone.com/.

CRAFTS FAIR: \$10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. St. Andrew the Apostle Church [613 Bedford Avenue, in Bed-Stuy, (718) 660-1010].

ARTISTS AND FLEAS: Free, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Bedford Avenue between Bedford Avenue and Berry Street in

http://
Find lots more listings online at BrooklynPaper.com/Events

Utrecht Reformed Church [18th Ave. between 83rd and 84th streets in Brooklyn], (718) 235-7173; historicnewutrecht.org.

MUSIC: *ANOTHER CHRISTMAS*, *ANOTHER CHRISTMAS* (8 p.m. Saturday), a holiday-themed musical revue, \$10 / 8 p.m. Salem Lutheran Church [450 5th St. between 8th and 9th Streets in Park Slope], (718) 668-1000; www.salemchurch.org.

MUSIC: *"SALSA"* FUNDRAISER: For "Get the Kids off the Street Project," 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, Brooklyn Masonic Temple [317 Clement Ave. between DeKalb and Lafayette Streets in Park Slope], (917) 330-6304; www.broadwaybazaar.com.

THEATER: *"THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS"*: Skin-loving Company XIV (7 p.m. Saturday, 8 p.m. Sunday), 8 p.m. Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill, (787-2222); www.CompanyXIV.com.

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See 9 DAYS on page 10

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Park Slope Paper, Saltzman's Tandoori Terrace Paper.

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December 4, 2009

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AWP 9



HIGHS...

Continued from page 7
 12:30 Dec. 12. \$10. Tickets,
 \$16. For info, visit www.thirstyspiritproductions.com.

And for the kids

Why should drunken adults have all the fun this holiday season. There are plenty of classic ways to keep the kids happy without taking them to American Girl Place, even!

Some people believe that Christmas begins and ends with the "Nutcracker," and we're not in the mood to argue. To see the best one in the borough, head for the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts for "The Colonial Nutcracker," which sets Tchaikovsky's classic



Kiss, kiss! The Schlep Sisters will bring their hot Hanukkah burlesque show to Southpaw on Dec. 12.

ballet in George Washington's Yorktown.

"Colonial Nutcracker" at the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts (2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place in Flatbush, (718) 951-4500), Dec.

13; 2 p.m. Tickets, \$6.

Ever wanted to beat Santa? Now's your chance. St. Nick (not his real name) will join you and the kids for breakfast at the New Utrecht

Reformed Church on Dec. 5,

with photo ops and laughs abound. If there's a better working Santa than Carmine Santa Maria (yes, that's his actual middle name), we don't know him.

Breakfast with Santa at New Utrecht Reformed Church (1861 Avenue between 83rd and 84th Streets in Bensonhurst, (718) 946-0234), Dec. 5, 11 a.m.

...And all through the Bronx, the Lyceum, there's a creature for an evil wizard and an army of filthy-but-child-friendly monsters. What's the most frightening creature?"Twas the Night Before... MONSTERS!" two young puppets make a twined-up sing-along. And what they weave in and out of the story and spirit of the holidays.

"Twas the Night Before... Monsters" (Lyceum, 227 Fourth Ave. between Union and President streets in Park Slope, (646) 329-9218), Dec. 12, 13, 19 and 20; 10 a.m., 5 p.m. For info, visit www.bkcraftcentral.com.

The last party

The holidays are over, the extended family's gone and New Year's Eve is your last chance to wreak havoc before you get back to work again. So make resolutions that you intend to keep:

• Three famed Brooklyn performers — SIS, Eli Pernickay Reed & The True Loves, and the Subway Soul Club DJs — will keep you up even after you download the mistletoe around like a concert at the Bell House. It's going to be so classy, they'll be passing out canapés. Sofia Blue de Blah championed with admission. That's right, cans. Last year's event was sold out, so get your tickets early.

• Rock 'N' Soul New Year's Eve Party" at the Bell House (149 Seventh Street between Second and Third Avenues in Gowanus, (718) 443-1030), Dec. 31; 8 p.m. Tickets, \$30 in advance. For info, visit www.thesoulhouse.com.

• A majesties sweeping ballroom awaits those with a more "proper" sense of swelling booze and wolfing down merrymakers in the new grand ballroom at Dwyer Beach Golf Course. The elegant party will feature new-fangled TV screens to watch the Times Square count-down, live bands, a premium open bar and a massive shrimp dinner (with your \$150 ticket, that is).

Dwyer Beach Golf Course (86th Street and Seventh Avenue, (718) 836-9722).

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2009—1:00PM
 BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Join Dr. Karen Lemmey, formerly of The Smithsonian and now at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Green-Wood's historian Jeff Richman for a new look at Green-Wood's great sculpture collection. This is the second trolley tour in a series lead by Dr. Lemmey.

The trolley tour is \$20 / \$10 for Historic Fund members.
 Reservations recommended. Tickets available online.

To reserve your tickets, go online to green-wood.com/toursevents or call 718.768.7300 for more information.

For more information on The Historic Fund, upcoming tours and events, visit greenwoodcemetery.org

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK—Est. 1838—Our main entrance is located at 500 25th Street (on 5th Avenue) in Brooklyn. Via subway, take the R to the 25th Street station. For more info, call 718.768.7300 or visit us on-line at greenwoodcemetery.org

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RESTAURANTS' WAGE WAR

State: Paid less than minimum, workers toiled for up to 72 hours

By Stephen Brown
The Brooklyn Paper

Just how bad the wages at Coco Roco and Olive Vine Cafes? New allegations from the state Department of Labor paint a grim picture of underpaid workers, unpaid overtime and long hours.

At Coco Roco on Fifth Avenue between Sixth and Seventh Streets, workers were cited as owing \$24,072 in back pay, while officials claim that a dishwasher worked 66 hours per week and received only \$360.00, amounting to \$4.50 an hour, below the minimum wage. One deliveryman allegedly worked 72 hours per week and was paid \$210, plus tips. Seven other employees were reported to endure similar workweeks.



Coco Roco and Olive Vine underpay their workers worse than other Park Slope eateries, according to the state Department of Labor.

Workers at Olive Vine Cafe on Seventh Avenue between Lincoln and St. Johns places, which was charged \$386,196

for back pay, also worked overtime hours for less than minimum wage. In one case, a deliveryman who also washed



dishes allegedly worked 72 hours for only \$260 in back wages for 10 hours a week. The minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. Olive Vine Cafe owner

Zaid Demis flatly denied the charges, saying the agency fudged its ergonomics policies. And Demis' legal department doesn't even get its facts straight — fining him for four years of back wages for a worker who was toiled at the restaurant for free.

He also complained that he was hit with \$75,000 in back wages for "uninformed persons," an odd designation considering it is he who will be reprimanded.

The Department of Labor did not respond to Demis' communications before the Brooklyn Paper's beat.

Zach Sunshine, the owner of Coco Roco, did not return repeated phone calls nor respond to visits by Brooklyn Paper reporters.

ALIEN...

Continued from page 1
cheat had stern words for any locals who were surprised.

"Wake up and smell the dawn," he said. "People should know that undocumented immigrants are the backbone of restaurants. It's not going to change anytime soon. Fifty percent of all hospitality labor in the city is undocumented."

In the wake of the wage crackdown, many owners bristled at the accusation that they were abusing their workers.

"The immigrants I love, it's the ones I hire," said Martin Medina, the owner of Rachel's on Fifth Avenue.

Zaid Demis, owner of Olive Vine Cafe, one of two allegedly worst offenders, struck a similar tone.

"I'm not on fire," he responded, referring to his immigrant self. "I'm an immigrant myself," Demis said. "We're their workers, then I'll put them on the books."

A Labor Department spokesman declined to say what the agency should fix America's broken immigration system. Its job, said Medina, is merely to ensure that laborers are paid properly.

Apparently, overworked and underpaid workers are less likely to think twice before smearing or spitting on a \$20 T-bone. But in these trying eco-

nomic times, eaters are in a bind. If they pay their workers full wages, their price of meals will go up.

"Our customers pay more to get our restaurant's name and fair wage," he responded.

But if Slopers are hesitant to give up a cheap burger prepared by cheap labor, they still might find a reason to support the workers of the restaurants that are guilty of labor abuse.

A 2005 study found a correlation between labor violations and food code violation.

"When we're doing a walk-through, we make sure you're giving good fair pay," said Duffy. "But in these trying eco-

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A 2005 study found a correlation between labor violations and food code violation.

"When we're doing a walk-through, we make sure you're giving good fair pay," said Duffy. "But in these trying eco-

nomics, From Los Angeles to the Bronx, Then I came home by bus."

I crossed the border hidden in a car. For us, it's a story, it's an adventure, it's a story, it's an adventure, to come to the United States.

The whole trip from Guatemala cost about \$4,000 — which would be worth it if they'd pay me to do the work. I worked in the United States for a year and a half to pay off the debt from that trip.

You don't come here to have fun, you come here to earn money, to work, to earn money, to come back, we have to deal with it all over again until we achieve the goal of sending money to our families. The situation in Guatemala is really tough. There is a lot of poverty there, so we send money so our daughters can go to school, to build a decent house.

We're responsible for helping our families.

The job being poor, we confront everything that comes with all this. If we go home

to Mexico.

I'll stay here until I can't find another job or I get tired of the situation. When I'm sick of all the problems I'll go back.

It's the slip in the face to the great bridge," said Michael Francis, referring to the Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates' plan to end Old Fulton Street, where George Washington saved our army

bridge that gives the park its name. The rendering merely shows new asphalt, wider sidewalks, a paved plaza, including a big grassy area and a massive granite front stoop looking out at Manhattan — is that all that's been done by the end of this year?

"The design is intended to create a continuous park experience," said Regina Myer, president of the Brooklyn Park Development Corporation, referring to existing green spaces to the north that are cut off from Pier 1 by the Riverbank.

But critics say the entryway defies state officials' promise of a "world class public park" in that it lacks a monumental element that would honor the harbor or the

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AWP 15



CAT MAN

Continued from page 1

Back in the late 1970s any true vigilante, Cat Man barged into an unoccupied apartment in hopes of rescuing the trapped feline — but his derring-do came with a price. Someone called the police. Someone called the cops.

Upon questioning, the boys inside were skeptical of Cat Man's claims that a mouser was trapped behind the wall. They thought that the frantic man was going through a psychotropic phase, and banished him to LICH.

A medical report compounded what Muth claims was a "bizarre delusion" that Muth was suffering a "bizarre delusion [that he] was trying to save a cat."

Muth quickly got away from the authorities, and made a foolhardy attempt to sue up against his captors.

"I said, 'Give me a pencil and paper; I'm going to write a press release and you are going to be the laughing stock of New York,'" Muth said.

Unfortunately, Muth made the demand to the resident nurse, and she was a woman who had become hysterical. The nurse called over officers, who held down Muth while she administered a shot of Haldol, a powerful anti-psychotic drug, court papers allege.

Muth was eventually proven to be sane — regarding the cat at least. But he was indeed rescued by an animal control officer after 15 days. But by then, Cat Man had been beaten up, his landlord kicked him out, he lost his job, and his girlfriend dumped him — though they are now back together.

Now, Cat Man hears the calling of other quests. In addition to his LICH suit, his 23-year-old son posthumously entered into the Guinness Book of World Records, while also suing the

FOIL

Continued from page 1

a basketball arena near the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues.

"Of course they do not want to show how they came up with that number because it would undermine them and their appraisers," Goldstein said. "The number is completely out of whack."

Realtors and agents, as well as lawyers who handle condemnation cases, agreed that the offer was extremely low considering the size of the unit — a 1,000-square-foot Prospect Heights One broker said the unit is worth nearly double what the state offered, and another, Andrew M. K. Rubin suggested that the ESDC was lowballing his client because of his outspoken opposition to the project.

Goldstein said that ESDC did not make its appraisal documents available to him, either, which he believed either lawyer Bill Ward, who is not involved in this case, saw as an indication that agency has no intention of negotiating with Goldstein to reach a "fair market value and just compensation" — the legal standard in eminent domain cases.

Goldstein's apartment is central to Rattner's vision — in that Goldstein's building would be near center court of the proposed arena.

That arena took a huge step forward last week when New York's highest court ruled that the state's use of eminent domain to hand over privately owned property to Rattner was lawful.



OUCH! The ESDC's rejection of our "Freedom of Information request."

NORAH

Continued from page 1

Yet as Norah Jones is poised to install her windowsill Shostak convinced that those 10 architecturally inappropriate apertures are the window not merely Norah's living room, but her soul.

"I live in a good neighborhood," he said, "you have to be a good neighbor."

Persevering, he is sending Shostak a message: Her big new song, after all, is titled "Back to Manhattan." "I'll go back to Manhattan/As if nothing ever happened," she croons.

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On the red side of the ledger, Muth faces an epically ugly judgment by the IRS, to which Muth says he owes \$800,000.

Taking a break from his headaches, Cat Man reflected on his battles in the legal arena. "How can you stand up for yourself in this culture?" he asked. "You can punch someone and get arrested, or you can sue."

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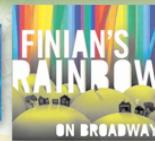
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